

# **Dawn Summary 18 August 2025**

## **Summary of Hockey's woes**

Pakistan's national sport, hockey, continues to decline due to years of mismanagement, financial instability, and weak governance. The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has failed to pay players and cannot independently fund participation in major international tournaments, including the prestigious FIH Pro League, which remains beyond its reach both financially and competitively. Once a global powerhouse in hockey, Pakistan is now struggling even to secure a place among the sport's elite. The PHF has sought Rs350 million in government funding, but the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) and the government have lost trust in the federation due to its inability to provide transparent records of past grants and account statements. Pakistan's qualification for the Pro League was not earned on the field but granted only because New Zealand withdrew after winning the FIH Nations Cup, citing high costs. The government now faces a dilemma: supporting the PHF could restore Pakistan hockey by giving the team exposure against top sides, yet the federation's history of poor accountability raises concerns. The way forward lies in conditional support — ensuring that the PHF improves governance, demonstrates financial transparency, and clears outstanding payments to players before any new funding is disbursed.

## **Summary of National drift**

The article reflects on how far Pakistan has strayed from Mohammad Ali Jinnah's original vision, with this year's Independence Day serving as a clear reminder. Instead of honoring the Quaid and other national leaders, the government's official advertisement completely omitted their images, an oversight that only came to light after being raised in the Senate. Meanwhile, banners and posters across cities glorified present-day leadership rather than acknowledging the founders of the nation. Independence Day, traditionally meant to celebrate freedom and the sacrifices behind it, was overshadowed by self-congratulatory displays. While the armed forces' recent achievements are commendable, such recognition would have been more appropriate on Defence Day. Moreover, the distribution of national awards highlighted political favoritism, with honors granted to cabinet members and ruling party lawmakers for routine duties rather than genuine national service. Though the prime minister refused an award for himself, the overall impression was one of self-celebration by the powerful. The day, which could have been dedicated to reaffirming Jinnah's vision and ideals, instead turned into a platform for political loyalty and personal glorification.

## **Summary of No easy path**

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The article highlights that while Pakistan's economy has recently shown signs of stability — such as slowing inflation, foreign reserves rising above \$14 billion, a current account surplus, and a reduced fiscal deficit — these gains are largely the result of IMF-imposed austerity measures rather than strong domestic reforms. The positive developments have led to an upgrade in Pakistan's sovereign rating, restoring some market confidence, yet deep structural weaknesses persist. Large-scale manufacturing (LSM), which contributes about 8% to GDP, shrank by 0.74% last year, failing to meet even modest growth targets. For three consecutive years, big industry has either stagnated or contracted, reflecting long-term fragility. While recent months have shown consecutive year-on-year growth in LSM, the simultaneous monthly declines reveal volatility and brittleness. Key factors behind this instability include high energy prices, expensive borrowing, heavy taxation, policy unpredictability, and import restrictions driven by dollar shortages. The overall GDP growth of just 2.7% last year mirrors this weak industrial performance. Recent improvements — such as lower inflation from global commodity declines, reduced deficits from austerity, and stronger reserves supported by debt rollovers, remittances, and strict import curbs — remain fragile and dependent on external support rather than lasting reforms. Despite the ratings upgrade, Pakistan remains in speculative territory, with markets still perceiving significant risks. The central question is whether policymakers can use this temporary relief to implement structural reforms that enhance productivity, reduce energy costs, and attract investment. Without such reforms, Pakistan's economy risks remaining trapped in a cycle of underperformance, vulnerability, and reliance on short-term stopgap measures.

### **Summary of “A higher ideal” by Umair Javed**

The article “A higher ideal” by Umair Javed reflects on the strained prospects of peace in South Asia, particularly between India and Pakistan, even after seventy-eight years of independence. Despite a brief phase of hope in the early 2000s, the region has since returned to diplomatic hostility and conflict. In India, the rise of aggressive right-wing nationalism under the BJP has reshaped both domestic politics and foreign policy. By linking national pride to displays of hard power — such as surgical strikes and cross-border actions — the space for dissenting views on foreign relations has diminished. This political strategy, which combines promises of economic growth with cultural purification, relies heavily on the otherisation of Indian Muslims and on portraying Pakistan as an external embodiment of domestic grievances. The BJP's move to commemorate Aug 14 as ‘Partition Massacres Day’ reflects how past tragedies are repurposed as political tools rather than moments of reconciliation. India's media, including outlets that claim liberal credentials, often amplify this jingoistic discourse, while digital and physical barriers have eliminated most avenues of people-to-people contact.

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In Pakistan, circumstances differ but are equally unfavorable for normalisation. Domestic politics remain tightly controlled by the establishment, with foreign policy guided largely by military strategy. Internal security challenges in Balochistan and the northwest are often blamed solely on Indian interference, restricting the scope for exploring alternative, homegrown solutions. The recent conflict in May further entrenched the military's hawkish stance, as the state leveraged India's aggression to consolidate legitimacy and power. On the societal front, Pakistan shows more openness, with cultural exchanges and religious tourism sustaining limited cross-border curiosity and goodwill. However, these efforts are overshadowed by India's rising right-wing hostility, which has weakened peace advocates within Pakistan.

Ultimately, the piece underscores that the militarised logic of security continues to dominate regional relations, keeping both countries and their societies trapped in polarisation and insecurity. Yet, amid this bleak reality, Javed argues for clinging to a higher ideal — that peace, however distant, is a far more desirable and sustainable mode of existence than perpetual hostility, especially for the 1.5 billion people whose lives remain bound by this enduring conflict.

#### **Summary of "War on truth" by Maleeha Lodhi**

The article "*War on truth*" by Maleeha Lodhi highlights Israel's intensifying military campaign in Gaza, where journalists have become deliberate targets of its war strategy. The recent killing of four Al Jazeera journalists, including the prominent Anas al-Sharif, in a drone attack outside Al-Shifa hospital exemplifies Israel's attempt to silence media coverage of its atrocities. Labeling slain journalists as " Hamas terrorists " reflects a systematic disinformation tactic reportedly backed by a special Israeli military unit tasked with smearing reporters. Since the start of the Gaza war nearly two years ago, 242 journalists have been killed — the highest number ever recorded in any conflict — sparking global outrage and condemnations from the UN, human rights organizations, and journalist bodies. Yet Israel continues to act with impunity, emboldened by consistent US backing.

Lodhi stresses that Israel's broader objective is to suppress reporting on the genocide, famine, and mass starvation imposed on Palestinians. Despite bans on international media, local journalists have documented Israel's atrocities, making this the most recorded genocide in history. Images of starving children and videos of Israeli troops firing on aid-seekers have gone viral, eroding Israel's moral standing globally. The planned military takeover of Gaza City has triggered strong opposition from the UN, EU, Arab states, and even Western allies like France and the UK, but Washington has stood firmly behind Israel. While global opinion, especially in Europe, is shifting toward recognizing Palestinian

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statehood — with over 147 UN members already doing so — the US remains opposed, echoing Tel Aviv’s rejection of a two-state solution and implicitly endorsing Netanyahu’s vision of a “Greater Israel.”

The article concludes that Israel’s ability to ignore international law and persist with ethnic cleansing stems from its reliance on unwavering American military, diplomatic, and financial support. Despite widespread condemnation, the world has failed to pressure the US into changing its stance, leaving Palestinians trapped in a catastrophic situation. Lodhi argues that Washington’s complicity grants Israel a free hand in Gaza, enabling both the war on people and the war on truth to continue unchecked.

### **Summary of “The age of AI” by Raja Muhammad Atif Azad**

The article “*The age of AI*” by Raja Muhammad Atif Azad reflects on both the promise and perils of artificial intelligence in modern society. Drawing inspiration from *Star Trek*’s character Data — an AI portrayed as free of deceit and bias — the writer contrasts this ideal with today’s real-world AI systems, which often reflect human prejudices and limitations. While AI is now capable of performing surgeries, delivering legal verdicts, and driving vehicles, its flaws can have life-altering or even fatal consequences. Examples include a New Zealand man’s passport photo wrongly rejected because of his eye shape, the COMPAS algorithm denying parole to a Black inmate due to biased risk assessment, and a Tesla autopilot crash caused by misidentifying a truck. These cases highlight how AI, trained on human data, can amplify systemic biases at scale.

Azad argues that blind trust in AI’s apparent accuracy can be dangerous, as its learning processes differ fundamentally from human cognition and remain opaque even to creators. Moreover, underrepresentation of certain groups in training datasets, such as people with darker skin tones in dermatological studies, risks perpetuating healthcare and social inequalities. Recognising these dangers, the EU AI Act classifies AI systems that impact human welfare and safety as high-risk, emphasizing the need for responsible and transparent use. For a diverse country like Pakistan, these challenges are magnified but also present opportunities. By involving researchers from technical and social sciences, and engaging directly with communities, Pakistan can build contextually aware AI systems that ensure fairness across healthcare, justice, and economic sectors.

The author stresses the importance of expanding public understanding through AI conversion courses that attract students from varied disciplines, thereby embedding ethical considerations in education and research. Ultimately, Azad contends that ideals of fairness, justice, and equity — while divine in essence — are now being tested in the realm of machines. Whether artificial intelligence can achieve what human intelligence has long

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struggled with remains uncertain, but the pursuit of justice through transparency, inclusivity, and integrity must guide its development.

### **Summary of “Plastic deadlock” by Huma Yusuf**

The article “*Plastic deadlock*” by Huma Yusuf discusses the collapse of UN-led negotiations on a global plastics treaty, which was expected to be the most significant environmental accord since the Paris Agreement. The breakdown, driven largely by oil-producing countries rejecting caps on plastic production, highlights the world’s dependence on plastics, nearly all of which are fossil fuel-based. With global plastic production already at 460 million tons annually — projected to triple by 2060 — the consequences of unchecked growth are dire, particularly for climate-vulnerable countries like Pakistan. The author draws a direct link between plastics and climate change, noting that fossil fuel consumption in plastic production exacerbates global warming, which in turn fuels natural disasters like the devastating flash floods that recently killed over 220 people in KP and Gilgit-Baltistan.

While Pakistan’s climate minister criticized developed nations for treating countries like Pakistan as dumping grounds for plastic waste, Yusuf underscores the hypocrisy: Pakistan itself is among the world’s top 10 plastic waste producers, generating 2.6 million tons annually, with 86% of it mismanaged. The country consumes 55 billion single-use plastic bags a year and even imports hazardous waste, worsening its environmental crisis. The social costs are also high, with informal waste pickers — often women and children — exposed to dangerous conditions, while pollution contributes to serious health issues such as hormonal disorders, cancer, and respiratory diseases.

Despite this, Pakistan is unlikely to abandon plastics anytime soon, given their deep economic entrenchment. Over 11,000 companies in the sector contribute 15% to GDP and employ more than half a million workers, with demand growing by 15% annually. Though Pakistan has joined international initiatives such as the Global Plastic Action Partnership and launched a national roadmap to reduce waste by 75% by 2040, implementation remains weak. Repeated bans on single-use plastic bags have failed due to poor enforcement, fragmented policies, lack of awareness, and few affordable alternatives.

Yusuf concludes that Pakistan must adopt a back-to-basics approach for a sustainable plastic future. This includes consistent nationwide waste collection, expanded sorting and recycling facilities, and serious efforts toward reducing, reusing, and upcycling plastics. Without such fundamental measures, the country’s plastic problem will continue to worsen, leaving its environment and society burdened with pollution and its deadly consequences.

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